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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6275

February 18, 2021

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

Samantha Power
Administrator Nominee
United States Agency for
International Development
2733 Crystal Dr.
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Ms. Power,

During the 116th Congress, I investigated allegations that World Vision (a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization) had partnered with and diverted government funds to a terrorist-funding organization known as the Islamic Relief Agency (ISRA).¹ My investigation concluded that World Vision was not originally aware of ISRA's sanctioned status and did not seek to circumvent U.S. law. However, several emails uncovered during my investigation show that while you were the Ambassador to the United Nations, you were involved in efforts to delist ISRA from the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons (SDN) list. It remains unclear from the emails examined by my office why you would take an interest in advocating on behalf of a foreign sanctioned entity.

Generally, if an individual or a non-governmental organization (NGO) believes that they were misidentified, wrongly placed, or have significantly changed behavior enough to justify their removal from the SDN list, they may request that they be removed by contacting the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC).² Our records indicate that ISRA did not reach out to OFAC to have their status re-examined. Despite this, in emails dated February 20, 2015, your deputy, Jeremy Weinstein, contacted OFAC requesting that OFAC, "initiate a review without a formal request from [ISRA]."³ This email chain is subsequent to another set of emails sent earlier on

¹ Memorandum from the Senate Committee on Finance, Oversight and Investigations unit on World Vision Financial Transactions to Senator Charles Grassley (Dec. 22, 2020), <https://www.finance.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Oversight,%2012-23-20,%20Memo%20on%20World%20Vision%20Investigation.pdf>

² 41 C.F.R. § 501.807.

³ Email from Jeremy Weinstein, Deputy to the U.N. Ambassador to John Smith, acting Director of OFAC (Feb. 20, 2015) on file with author).

February 11, 2015, stating that you had asked your staff to “follow up” on “a long-running issue related to [the U.S.’s] designation of [ISRA].”⁴

If ISRA believed that they had been wrongly placed on the SDN list, they should have contested their placement in accordance with U.S. law, not lobbied for special access and reviews. It appears that ISRA utilized your office and the UN in an attempt to muscle their way off the SDN list via back channel political pressure. It is critically important that U.S. dollars not go to funding terrorist activity, and NGOs that funnel money to terrorist organizations must be immediately cut off from all forms of funding. In light of these findings and your pending nomination before the Senate please respond to the following questions before March 4, 2021.

1. When did you first become involved in seeking a review of ISRA’s SDN listing?
2. Are you aware of any other individuals that were involved in seeking a review of ISRA’s placement on the SDN list? If so, who?
3. If you were aware of ISRA’s extensive history of financing terrorists, why did you feel it prudent to advocate for overturning their designation? If you were not aware, did you or your staff conduct any due diligence regarding ISRA’s history? If not, why not?
4. Do you know why ISRA did not request a review of their status directly from OFAC? Did you encourage ISRA to file for a review on their own? If not why not?
5. Did your office consult with legal counsel regarding the legality of requesting a review outside the general OFAC parameters?⁵ If so, what was their response?
6. Did your office attempt to assist any other organizations in the delisting process outside the OFAC parameters?⁶ If so, which organizations and why? If not, why was ISRA singled out?
7. Did your office attempt to assist any other organizations in the delisting process according to the OFAC parameters?⁷ If so, which organizations and why?
8. Were you given direction by any other part of the Obama Administration to seek ISRA’s delisting outside the OFAC parameters?⁸
9. If you are confirmed, will you commit to doing a full audit of USAID funds in order to ensure they are not going to benefit terrorism?

⁴ Redacted emails (Feb. 11, 2015) (on file with author).

⁵ 41 C.F.R. § 501.807.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

10. If you are confirmed, will you commit to creating a process that will provide more adequate assurances that US funds are not going to assist in terrorism? What steps would you take?

Should you have any questions please reach out to Daniel Boatright or Dario Camacho of my Judiciary staff at (202) 224-5225. Thank you for your time and consideration regarding this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chuck Grassley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Charles Grassley
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on the Judiciary